

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge that the proposed drawing changes, filed on April 4, 2003, have been approved (Office Action, dated June 4, 2003, page 3, lines 1-5). Filed herewith are the formal drawings incorporating the changes approved by the Examiner.

Claims 38 and 49-54 are pending and have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) as anticipated by Kotato et al. (U.S. Patent 56,099,678). However, the effective date of the Kotato Patent is June 27, 1997. The Applicants, in this case, can establish a priority date of July 6, 1995 for the claims of the present application.

Specifically, the present application is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 08/981,702 filed March 31, 1998, and also claims priority to July 6, 1995 through Japanese Patent Application No. 7-171154 and International Patent Application No. JP96/01886 (See Applicants' Declaration, previously filed). Both the Japanese Application and the International Application were filed in Japanese. Applicants have previously filed a certified copy of the priority documents in the parent application 08/981,702, which has been acknowledged by the Examiner (Office Action, dated June 4, 2003, see Office Action Summary, item no. 13). To perfect the priority date of July 6, 1995, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.55, Applicants file herewith certified English translations of both the Japanese Patent Application No. 7-171154 and International Patent Application No. JP96/01886.

The Kotato Patent is not valid prior art in view of the present filings. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 (e) is untenable and must be withdrawn. No further comment regarding the Kotato Patent is required.

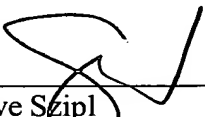
Serial No. 09/785,436

In view of the present filings, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 38 and 49-54 for the reasons of record.

Questions are welcomed by the below signed attorney for the Applicants.

Respectfully submitted,

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